

Fwd: CLIPS - Global - 'Threat still exists': Emergencies Act to remain as long as required, Bill Blair says

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Date: Mon, 21 Feb 2022 14:02:56 +0000

Note Bill Blair's point on donations at the bottom of the story.
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Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

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Date: February 21, 2022 at 8:21:07 AM EST
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Subject: CLIPS - Global - 'Threat still exists': Emergencies Act to remain as long as required, Bill Blair says

Global - 'Threat still exists': Emergencies Act to remain as long as required, Bill Blair says

By Saba Aziz

February 20, 2022

The federal government will continue to implement never-before-used powers under the Emergencies Act as long "as they are required" to help end the illegal blockade of the national capital, Emergency Preparedness Minister Bill Blair has said.

The time-limited and targeted measures were invoked by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Monday, giving federal authorities exceptional powers aimed at bringing the convoy protests — that have now entered the fourth week — to an end.

In an interview with The West Block's Mercedes Stephenson on Sunday, Blair gave no timeline or criteria on when those measures could be lifted, saying that a "threat still exists."

"We understand the magnitude and significance of the measures that we've brought in place. They are only going to be in place as long as they are required," he said.

Police operation continued Sunday to clear the area near Parliament Hill, where the so-called Freedom Convoy has been encamped, protesting against COVID-19 vaccine mandates and other public health measures.

Since Friday, 191 people have been arrested and among those 103 have been charged mainly for mischief and obstruction, according to Ottawa police.

Ottawa police use anti-riot weapons on convoy protesters, arrest 170 total

Blair said even though police have made "extraordinary progress" to restore peace in the capital and elsewhere, "the job is not yet done."

Blair said as soon as the job is completed, "we will end these measures."

A motion on the government's invocation of the Emergencies Act is being debated in the House of Commons, with MPs set to vote on it Monday.

Conservative critics in the House of Commons have questioned the Liberal government's basis for invoking the Emergencies Act, citing concerns about powers given to financial institutions.

The act requires banks to review accounts and freeze any associated with the convoy, and allows federal institutions to share more information with banks about involvement in the convoy.

Trucker protests: At least \$3.2M frozen in connection with demonstrations, feds say

During a news conference Saturday, Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino said that at least 76 bank accounts worth \$3.2 million, have been frozen due to ties to the convoy under the powers of the Emergencies Act.

Trudeau has said that the act would not overstep protections enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Meanwhile, large donations for the protest group have come under scrutiny with Ottawa police arguing that a U.S.-based crowdfunding campaign by GiveSendGo, that has raised more than US\$9.7 million, was "facilitating" crime.

Blair said those who have donated to the convoy would not be subject to a criminal investigation, saying law enforcement officials were concerned with how the money was being used instead.

"I want to assure those people who made donations ... that's ... of no interest whatsoever to our law enforcement officials," he said.